

CLAIMS

1. A process for preparing an alginate or low-methoxy pectate gel in which water and a dispersion of alginate or 5 low-methoxy pectate are mixed in an in-line dynamic mixer to produce a sol of alginate or low-methoxy pectate and then free gelling ions are generated in the sol in the mixer either a) by including in the water or in the dispersion of alginate or low-methoxy pectate a salt 10 providing gelling ions when dissolved which is insoluble at neutral pH but soluble at acid pHs and by feeding an acid to the sol as an aqueous solution or as a dispersion or b) by feeding a dispersion of a low-solubility salt providing gelling ions to the sol after which the resulting mixture 15 is allowed to gel.
2. A process according to claim 1 in which after the free gelling ions have been generated in the sol in the mixer the sol is allowed to gel quiescently immediately after leaving the mixer.
- 20 3. A process according to claim 1 or claim 2 in which the free gelling ions are generated by feeding to the sol a dispersion of a low-solubility salt providing gelling ions.
4. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 3 in which a dispersant is used to prepare the dispersion of the 25 alginate or low-methoxy pectate, of the acid or of the low-solubility salt which is an anhydrous liquid dispersant

which disperses or dissolves in water.

5. A process according to claim 4 in which the dispersant is such that the alginate or low-methoxy pectate, the acid or the low-solubility salt can remain in suspension in the 5 dispersant over periods of up to fifteen minutes without stirring.

6. A process according to claim 4 or claim 5 in which the dispersant has lubricating properties.

7. A process according to any one of claims 4 to 6 in 10 which the dispersant is an edible oil containing lecithin.

8. A process according to claim 3 and any one of claims 4 to 7 when dependent on claim 3 in which the low-solubility salt providing gelling ions has a solubility in the sol of less than 3.5%.

15 9. A process according to claim 8 in which the low-solubility salt providing gelling ions has a solubility in the sol of less than 1%.

10 10. A process according to claim 9 in which the salt has a solubility in the sol of less than 0.3% but above 0.02%.

20 11. A process according to any one of claims 8 to 10 in which the low-solubility salt providing gelling ions is a calcium salt.

12. A process according to claim 11 in which the calcium salt is calcium sulphate anhydrous, calcium sulphate

25 dihydrate, calcium citrate or calcium tartrate

13. A process for preparing an alginate or low-methoxy

pectate gel according to any one of claims 1 to 12 in which meat or fruit in pumpable form is included in one or more of the liquids mixed in the mixer.

14. A process for preparing an alginate or low-methoxy

5 pectate gel according to any one of claims 1 to 12 in which therapeutic amounts of biologically active substances are included in one or more of the liquids mixed in the mixer.

15. A process according to claim 14 in which anaerobic

bacteria are the biologically active substances and they
10 are introduced into the mixer by incorporation into the

water.

16. A process according to claim 14 or 15 in which the gel is broken into portions.

17. A product of a process according to any one of claims
15 1 to 15.

18. A process in which a product of a process according to claim 14 or claim 15, after being broken into portions, is fed to livestock.

19. A process according to claim 18 in which the time
20 between the incipiently gelling mixture leaving the mixer and the portions of gel being fed to livestock is less than 30 minutes.

20. A process according to claim 18 or claim 19 in which the livestock are chicks.

25 21. A feedstock for livestock which require water but are sensitive to free water in their environment consisting of

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a product of claim 16.

22. A feedstock for chicks consisting of a product of
claim 16.

23. An in-line dynamic mixer with feed points through
5 which a) a dispersion of alginate or low-methoxy pectate,
b) water and c) a source of gelling ions can be separately
fed to the mixer, feed points a) and b) being spaced
sufficiently up-stream of feed point c) that in use the
alginate or low-methoxy pectate forms a sol before it comes
10 into contact with gelling ions.

24. Any new feature described herein or any new
combination of herein described features.

25. A process or product substantially described herein
with reference to the Example.